

Motivation of Women Leaders in Digital Economy

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the digital economy and the increasing public awareness of diversity in the workplace have created equal opportunities for employees from various backgrounds both men and women, to work and contribute their best to organizations. This study aims to explore the motivation of workers as leaders, particularly women leaders who operate within digital based industries and organizations, by highlighting the internal and external factors that drive their success and persistence in a technology driven environment. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine women's motivation in the context of the digital economy. The literature analyzed in this study was obtained from officially published journals indexed in databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Embase, etc. The inclusion criteria focused on studies discussing women's motivation and leadership behavior. The findings identify three main dimensions influencing motivation: intrinsic motivation (personal values, self-fulfilment, and digital competence), extrinsic motivation (organizational recognition, financial rewards, and career development), and social motivation (mentorship, networking, and gender inclusivity). The results of this study aim to understand how these factors influence employees, particularly women, in delivering their best performance to achieve structural leadership positions within organizations and become effective leaders in the digital era.

Keywords: *Motivation, Leadership Behaviour, Systematic Literature Review (SLR), Women Leadership*

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1. | INTRODUCTION

In the era of the fast-paced digital economy, structural changes in business and technology demand the presence of adaptive and visionary leaders. Digital transformation not only affects products and services, but it also affects the way organizations are led and how leadership in-practice. For women occupying leadership positions in the digital economy, their motivation to play a leadership role and how they articulate a digital vision is crucial (Al-Shammari, 2026). Research on women's leadership in the digital context is still relatively limited and is often associated with issues of gender equality, access to technology, and structural barriers. As a systematic study, this study seeks to review the motivation of women leaders in the digital economy to fill the literature gap. The focus of this research is not solely on leadership in general, but specifically on the motivations that encourage women to play a role in the digital economy as leaders (Gunes & Chang, 2025).

Women's motivation to enter leadership positions in the digital economy is influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include the desire to be empowered, self-efficacy, career ambitions, and innovation orientation; while external factors include digital opportunities, sociocultural changes, network support, organizational policies, and access to technology. Research (Gunes & Chang, 2025) shows that women's motivation can come from self-awareness of the need to contribute to digital communities, as well as social motivation to fill literacy gaps. In addition, digitalization opens new opportunities previously closed to women, encouraging them to take on the role of digital leaders through technology, social media, and digital applications. Understanding the motivations of women leaders in the digital economy allows us to see how this combination of internal and external factors synergize with each other and creates opportunities for creative leadership in the digital age.

During the growth of the digital economy, women face unique obstacles that affect their path to leadership. These barriers include gender stereotypes, a lack of female role models in digital executive positions, limited access to technology and financial networks, and challenges with work-life balance. Although women are getting higher education and wider technology opportunities, their representation in digital leadership is still low, for example in the areas of Big Data, AI, and information systems (Thien et al., 2025). These barriers have become more complex due to the rapidly changing characteristics of technology, startup-based or agile work culture, and intense global competition.

In the context of the digital economy, the motivation to lead by women has significant implications for innovation, creativity, and organizational performance. Motivated female leadership in the digital realm can encourage technology adoption, strengthen a culture of innovation, and increase gender inclusivity in digital projects. Digital marketing and online platforms have enabled women entrepreneurs to innovate and expand their markets. Therefore, the motivation of women leaders in the digital

economy is not only relevant individually or organizationally, but also for more inclusive and sustainable economic development. This study examines motivation as a psychological phenomenon while placing it within the framework of a larger digital economy (Khanal et al., 2026).

This study aims to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on the motivation of women leaders in the digital economy. This research focuses on identifying existing research trends, exploring the main motivating factors that drive women to become leaders, and uncovering unexplored gaps in the literature. In addition, this study aims to understand how contextual factors such as technology, organization, and culture affect women's motivation in digital leadership. The results of the research are expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of motivating factor mapping, as well as practical contributions for organizations and policymakers in supporting and optimizing women's leadership in the digital economy era.

2. | LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation

Motivation is defined as the psychological process that directs, reinforces and sustains individual behavior to achieve specific goals including intrinsic motivation (interest, job satisfaction, autonomy) and extrinsic motivation (rewards, recognition, career opportunities). Theories that are often used to explain work motivation include Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and needs theory, which emphasizes the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in building sustainable motivation (Putri Mediany & Muliah Shodiq, 2024). For women who are leaders in the digital ecosystem, motivation can arise from pull factors such as the desire for autonomy, opportunities to access the digital market, social influence, and economic empowerment aspirations; At the same time, it is influenced by constraints (push/pull tradeoffs) such as limited access to technology, data costs, and gender bias that hinder full participation. Study (Alhorr et al., 2024) shows that a combination of individual, structural, and policy factors determine the intensity and direction of women's motivation in the digital ecosystem.

Women's Digital Leadership

Women's digital leadership Referring to the leadership roles carried out by women in digital economy spaces including organizational leadership (start-ups, technology companies), digital community leadership, and the role of policy advocacy for digital inclusion. This concept includes digital skills, managerial capabilities, innovation, networking skills, and digital leadership competencies (W. Li & Chen, 2025). The theoretical framework for digital leadership combines leadership theory (e.g., transformational leadership) with digital transformation literature that emphasizes agility, adaptability, and digital fluency so that women's leadership in the digital age is judged not only from formal positions but also from the ability to utilize technology, network, and advocate for inclusive policies. Study (Grau-Sarabia & Fuster-Morell, 2021) Identify systemic barriers (skills gaps, funding biases, limited gender-

disaggregated data) as well as opportunities (global market access, digital platforms, mentoring/sponsorship programs) to strengthen women's leadership in the digital economy.

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to explore the motivation of women leaders in the digital economy. The procedure begins with the establishment of clear research questions: (1) What are the motivations that drive women to become leaders in the digital economy? (2) How do contextual factors (technology, organization, culture) affect the motivation? (3) Where is the next research space that needs to be developed? Furthermore, a literature search was conducted on indexed international databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Embase, with publication restrictions in last 5 years to ensure relevance and novelty. The main keywords used are for example: "Women Leadership", "Digital Economy", "Motivation", "Female Leader Technology", "Gender Inclusivity Digital Leadership" (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023). Boolean combinations such as AND/OR are implemented and adjusted per database to ensure systematic coverage. After the initial data collection, title and abstract screening is carried out, then fulltext screening based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been set.

Inclusion criteria include empirical or theoretical studies that: (a) focus on female leaders in the context of the digital economy or technology-based organizations; (b) discuss internal, external and/or social motivations that affect women U.S. leaders in the digital realm; (c) issued within the last 5 years; (d) is available in English and published in peer-reviewed journals. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include: (a) studies that do not explicitly discuss women's motivation or leadership in the digital economy; (b) editorial articles, commentaries, nonpeer review reports, or grey literature; (c) publications published before the last 5-year period; (d) studies that address only male leadership or non-digital contexts exclusively (Hadi & Afandi, 2021). Literature selection follows the PRISMA standard for process transparency, followed by data extraction using standard forms (e.g.: author, year, country, organizational context, type of motivation, research method, key findings) and thematic

analysis to identify motivational dimensions (intrinsic, extrinsic, social) and uncover gaps in the literature.

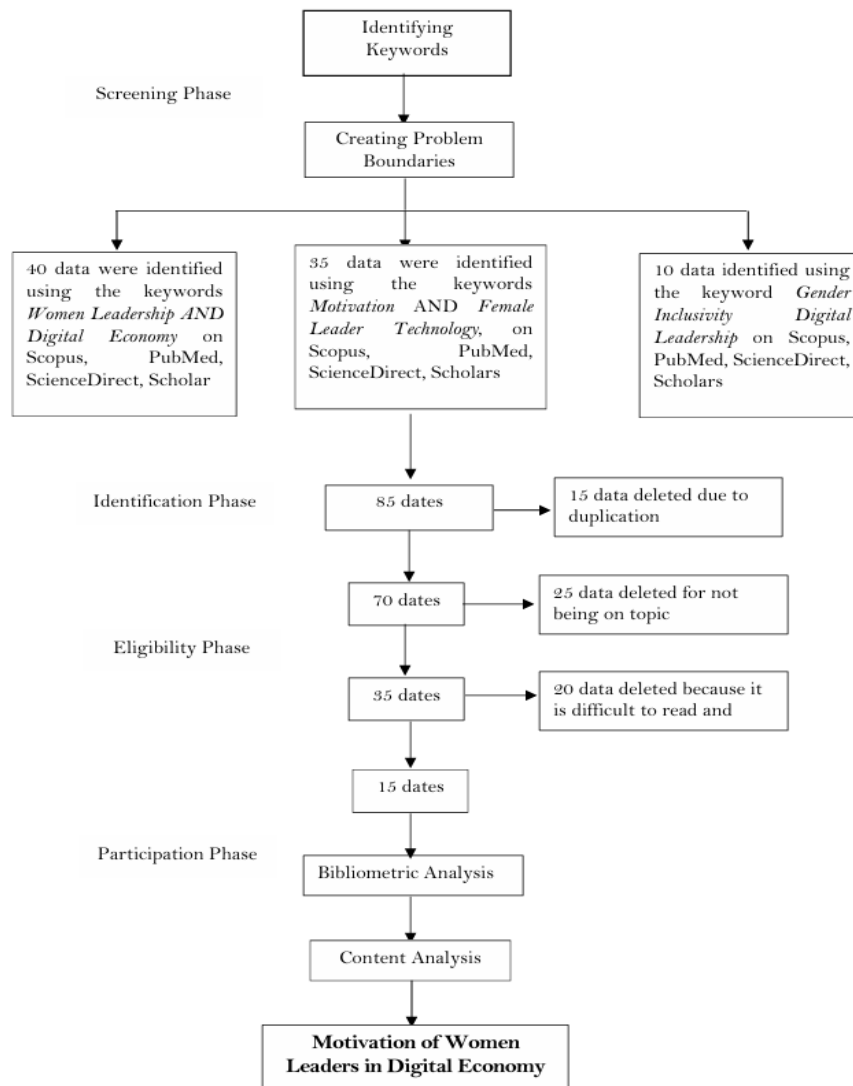


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

The article selection process in this study follows the PRISMA flow, starting from the initial identification of 85 articles obtained through three keyword groups in four main databases (Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar), namely "Women Leadership AND Digital Economy", "Motivation AND Female Leader AND Technology", and "Gender Inclusivity AND Digital Leadership". After the identification process, as many as 15 articles were deleted due to duplication, leaving 70 articles for the eligibility stage. At this stage, a quality assessment was carried out based on the relevance of the theme, readability, completeness, and basic methodological feasibility, so that 25 articles were eliminated because they were not suitable for topic and 20 articles were deleted because they were difficult to read or did not meet academic standards, leaving 15 final articles that were considered the most relevant and representative. This number is considered adequate in bibliometrics-based

studies and content analysis because what is emphasized is not the quantity, but the suitability and quality of the literature material to the research focus on the motivation of women leaders in the digital economy. This study did not include risk of bias assessment because it did not use a systematic review design based on empirical tests or meta-analysis, but rather a mapping analysis of the literature so that it does not require an experimental bias assessment; the potential for bias has been minimized through the elimination of duplication and the elimination of irrelevant or low-quality articles.

4. | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented based on a literature selection process that follows inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the validity and relevance of the findings. Of the identified articles, as many as 15 empirical and theoretical studies met the criteria, focusing on the motivation of female leaders in the context of the digital economy and technology-based organizations. Each article is extracted using a standard format that includes information regarding the author, year, organizational context, type of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, social), research methods, and key findings. Thematic analysis was then conducted to identify key patterns and trends related to factors that drive women's motivation in digital leadership, as well as to uncover research gaps that still need to be explored further.

Table 1. Literature Review

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
(Al-Shammari, 2026)	Women Leadership Pattern in Qatar and Their Impact on Promoting a Culture of Creativity and Innovation	Identify patterns of women's leadership in Qatar and their impact on the culture of creativity and innovation	Descriptive surveys with validated questionnaires	200 female employees from government agencies in Qatar; 106 respondents (56% response rate)	The dominant leadership style of women is democratic, followed by transformational; Both encourage creativity through participation, empathy,	Innovation culture in digital government	Medium (Q3)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
					and innovation		
(Gunes & Chang, 2025)	Women's pathways to leadership: A bibliometric review and qualitative inquiry into career progression in Turkey	Explore women's career journeys from recruitment to top executive positions and strategies to overcome obstacles	Bibliometric review (225 documents) & qualitative phenomenological	20 women leaders in Turkey	Two significant trends and two research gaps were identified; the four iterative dimensions in the leadership process; provide guidance for managers and HR for career equality	Leadership pipeline in digital sectors	High (Q1)
(Thien et al., 2025)	Women leadership in higher education: exploring enablers and challenges from middle-level academics' perspective	Explore the supporting factors and barriers for middle-aged female academics to achieve senior positions	Qualitative, interview	17 informants from five Malaysian public universities	Four supporting factors: gender-neutral policies, multi-role management, personal competence, mentors/role models; Three Challenges:	Digitalized higher education systems	Medium (Q2)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
					Women's Traditional Roles, Social Stigma, Personal Factors		
(Khanal et al., 2026)	Unpacking gendered challenges and coping strategies: A qualitative study on female educational leadership in Nepal	Examining the challenges and strategies of female coping in Nepal's educational leadership	Qualitative, interview	7 Women Leaders	Women succeed through resilience, self-efficacy, and professional, domestic, and community task management	Educational changes in digital era	Medium (Q4)
(Alhmoudi & Rashid, 2025)	Leadership performance evaluation of GCC women in middle and lower management in technology-based organizations: investigating	Examining the influence of economic factors on GCC women's leadership performance in technology-based organizations	Quantitative, questionnaire with 5-point Likert & multiple regression analysis	404 respondents in pairs (leaders & subordinates)	The GCC's women's leadership performance ranges from limited to excellent; All economic factors except the financial stability of the organization	Women leaders in technology organizations	High (Q1)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
	economic influences				ion have a significant effect		
(Agbanyo & Jiang, 2025)	Two-instance moderating dilemma between responsible leadership and family-supportive supervision behavior on women's career sustainability	Explain how responsible leadership (RL) and family-supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) moderate the impact of work-family conflict on women's career sustainability	Quantitatively, using PROCESS and MEMORE for the moderation analysis of the two agencies	Cross-cultural data from Chinese companies in Ghana	RL and FSSB significantly moderate the negative WFBC-CS relationship respectively; the interaction of RL and FSSB can weaken its individual impact. RL helps reduce the effect of WFBC on women's careers.	Career sustainability in globalized workplaces	High (Q1)
(Zhang & Liu, 2022)	Balancing employees' extrinsic requirements and intrinsic motivation: A paradoxical	Examining the effect of paradoxical leader behaviour (PLB) in increasing intrinsic motivation and	Quantitative, field survey with self-determination theory	392 employees and supervisors	PLB increases the perception of legitimate power and intrinsic motivation; These	Creativity core in digital economy	High (Q1)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
	cal leader behaviour perspective	creative performance of employees			two mechanisms together enhance employee creativity and proactive behavior.		
(Mohammadamin & Shabila, 2025)	Women in healthcare leadership: assessment of experiences, challenges, and opportunities	Assess women's experiences, challenges, and opportunities in health sector leadership in Iraq	Cross-sectional survey using questionnaire	371 female health workers in Erbil, Iraq	27% have held a leadership position; further education, training, and positions in the Directorate of Health are significantly related to the readiness of women to lead. Daycare support and training programs are important to advance women.	Digitalization in healthcare are leadership	Medium (Q3)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
(Putri Mediany & Muliah Shodiq, 2024)	Motivation and Challenges of Woman Entrepreneurs in the Digital Era (Case Study of Women Entrepreneur in Bandung)	Identify the dominant factors that encourage women to become entrepreneurs and the challenges they face in the digital era	Qualitative (interview & document analysis)	9 women entrepreneurs in Bandung	Pull factors (desire for autonomy, higher income, market opportunities) are the main motivations; The biggest challenge is digital skills and marketing; Government & Community Support Essential for Empowerment	Digital entrepreneurship	Medium (Q4)
(Ristanović et al., 2024)	Are Women Recognized in the Digital Economy? Experiences of Developed Economies	Explore the role of women in the digital economy in developed countries and identify challenges and recognitions	Literature review & quantitative analysis of secondary data	International documents and literature	The role of women in the digital economy is increasingly significant; digital skills and positions on corporate boards	Women in digital economy	Medium (Q3)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
					increase recognition; Obstacles such as glass ceilings and glass cliffs still exist		
(Wulandari & Ahmad, 2025)	The Influence of Women's Leadership Policy on Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age	Evaluate women's leadership policies and opportunities in the digital age, as well as policy reformulation for gender equality	Normative legal research (legislative, conceptual, comparative)	Policy analysis in Indonesia & Malaysia	Women still face gender bias, limited access to technology, and imbalances in the workplace; digitalization opens up leadership opportunities; Digital Literacy & Essential Protection Regulation	Regulatory framework digital age	Medium (Sinta 2)
(Qian, 2024)	Female Executives and Digital Transformation in	Examining the influence of the proportion of female executives	Quantitative Empirical	Companies in China, 2010–2021	The proportion of female executives is increasing	Digital transformation leadership	High (Q1)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
	Enterprises	on the level of digital transformation of companies			g the digitalization of companies through R&D intensity; Stronger effects on large non-government companies with dispersed ownership		
(S. Li & Sanusi, 2023)	Entrepreneurial motivations and business performance: A study of female online microbusiness owners	Examining the relationship between women's entrepreneurial motivation and online business performance	Quantitative (Structural Equation Modeling)	160 women online microbusiness owners in China	Pull motivation encourages focus on non-financial performance; push motivation encourages focus on financial performance; High motivation on necessity-driven contributes significantly to financial	Women's online/digital businesses	Medium (Q3)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
(Zahwa et al., 2025)	A Strategic Model for Women Entrepreneurs: Digital Literacy, Resources, and Innovation in Enhancing MSME Performance	Develop a strategic framework to improve the performance of women-led MSMEs through digital transformation, as well as analyze the relationship between digital literacy, corporate resources, digital innovation, and business performance.	Quantitative with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)	Member of the Indonesian Women Entrepreneurs Association (IWAPI) in West Java	Digital literacy and corporate resources have a significant positive effect on business performance, with digital innovation as the main mediating variable. Businesses with high digital literacy and good resource management produce more effective innovations that increase operational efficiency, sales, and market competitiveness.	Digital literacy & innovation	High (Q2)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objectives	Method	Samples/ Participants	Key Findings	Relevance to Digital Economy	Quality
(Khadiva & Rudito, 2025)	Motivation and Leadership Styles in Women-Led Organizations and the Triple Bottom Line	Investigate the relationship between motivational factors (push-pull), motivational sources (intrinsic-extrinsic), ethical leadership styles (authentic, servant, spiritual), and resource allocation strategies based on the concept of the Triple Bottom Line (economic, social, environmental).	Qualitative with an Input-Process-Output (IPO) conceptual framework	Women entrepreneurs in the fashion and textile sector Bandung, Indonesia	A significant correlation was found between motivation and leadership style: extrinsic motivation tends to be aligned with authentic leadership (economic orientation), while intrinsic motivation supports servant or spiritual leadership (social-environmental orientation). The study highlights the importance of policy support	Leadership in creative digital industries	Medium (Q4)

Author & Year	Article Title	Research Objective s	Metho d	Samples/ Participa nts	Key Findings	Releva nce to Digital Econo my	Quality
					for sustainab le		

Based on the results of a review of 15 articles that met the inclusion criteria, it appears that the motivation of women leaders in the digital economy is influenced by a combination of intrinsic, extrinsic, and social factors, which interact in a complex way with cultural, policy, and technological developments. In general, women are driven by intrinsic motivations such as self-actualization, professional satisfaction, and social contribution, accompanied by extrinsic motivations in the form of market opportunities, increased income, and professional recognition. A number of studies also affirm the importance of digital literacy, innovation, and organizational support in strengthening the leadership role of women in the technology sector and digital MSMEs. Challenges identified include gender bias, double burden, and gaps in access to resources and technology. Thematically, the literature results show that the success of women leaders in the digital age is not only determined by technological capabilities, but also by ethical leadership styles, inclusive policy support, and sustainable empowerment strategies that are able to balance economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

5. | DISCUSSION

Motivating Factors for Women in Digital Leadership

Women's motivation to become leaders in the context of the digital economy cannot be separated from the internal, external, and social dynamics that influence their behavior. Based on a synthesis of fifteen recent research articles, three main categories of driving factors were found: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and social-collective motivation. These three categories are in line with the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci & Ryan, as well as classical motivational theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Push–Pull Motivation Theory which are widely used in the study of women's entrepreneurship.

a. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is related to a person's internal drives, such as the desire to develop, achieve autonomy, master certain competencies, and gain meaning in work. According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000), intrinsic motivation is built on three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In this context, research by Putri & Shodiq (2024) shows that women digital entrepreneurs are motivated by the need for autonomy and self-actualization. This encouragement is in line with the autonomy and competence components in SDT.

Khadiva & Rudito (2025) also found that women's intrinsic motivation is closely related to servant and spiritual leadership styles, where work is seen as a means of actualizing personal and moral values. This represents the concept of intrinsic motivation that is oriented towards meaning and purpose.

The findings of Khanal (2026) and Thien et al. (2026) confirm that self-efficacy, resilience, and confidence in self-ability are important factors for women to break through structural barriers in the higher education sector and public institutions. This concept is in line with SDT which emphasizes the importance of competence in fostering intrinsic motivation. In addition, the findings of Zhang & Liu (2022) show that women who have strong intrinsic motivation tend to be more innovative in digital work environments, where creativity, agility, and flexibility are the main demands.

b. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation refers to external factors such as financial incentives, career opportunities, professional recognition, and economic stability. In Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, these factors are included in the category of hygiene factors and motivators, which can increase satisfaction and performance when managed appropriately. Research by Alhmoudi & Rashid (2025) shows that economic incentives and career development opportunities significantly affect women's leadership performance in GCC-based technology organizations. This is in line with Herzberg's motivators in the form of recognition and advancement. Qian (2024) also found that a higher proportion of female executives in Chinese companies correlates with increased digital transformation through R&D investment intensity.

In the context of digital entrepreneurship, research by Sanusi & Li (2023) confirms that women's motivation is influenced by push factors (economic needs, external pressures) and pull factors (business opportunities, flexibility, aspirations), in accordance with the Push–Pull Motivation Theory which is widely used in women's entrepreneurship studies. Furthermore, research by Zahwa et al. (2025) found that digital literacy, organizational support, and access to technological resources are the main extrinsic factors that strengthen innovation and performance of women's MSMEs. This combination of economic and technological factors reinforces that external motivators are an important foundation for women to take leadership roles in the digital economy.

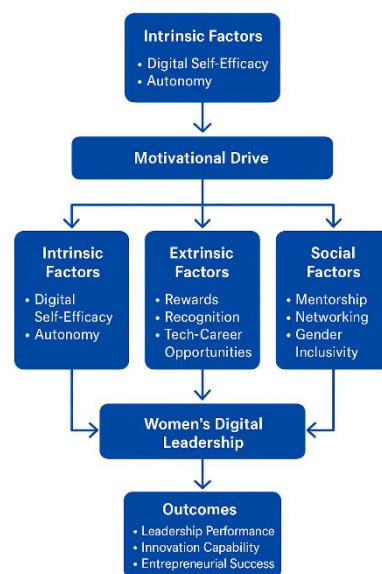


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Motivational Factors

c. Social Motivation and Collective Values

Social motivation reflects women's orientation towards empathy, empowerment, and ethical values in leadership. Al-Shammari (2025) found that the democratic and transformational leadership styles widely adopted by women leaders in Qatar are rooted in the social drive to create collaborative and innovative work environments. These findings are reinforced by Gunes & Chang (2025) who emphasize the importance of social networks and mentors in women's career journeys to top executive positions. Research by Mohamadamin & Shabila (2025) on Iraq's health sector also revealed that women are motivated by community support, social facilities such as daycare, as well as social roles that allow them to lead without abandoning family responsibilities. In the context of law and public policy, Wahyuni Retno Wulandari & Nadzriah Ahmad (2025) show that women's social motivation is strengthened by the agenda of equality and legal protection, which encourages them to actively participate in the digital space as agents of social change. Vladimir Ristanović et al. (2024) highlight that recognition of women's contributions to the digital economy in developed countries is increasing along with their participation in corporate boards and collaborative value-based digital ecosystems. These factors show that social motivation is a driving force for women to not only achieve personal success but also advance collective well-being.

The Influence of Technological, Organizational, and Cultural Contexts on Women's Leadership Motivation

Technological, organizational, and cultural contexts have a significant influence on the formation and sustainability of women's leadership motivation in the digital economy era. In terms of technology, digital literacy is the main foundation that determines the extent to which women can adapt and lead in the digital-based business landscape. The study of Almu Zahwa, Sutjipto, & Salim (2025) shows that digital

literacy plays a key role as a key factor that mediates the relationship between corporate resources and digital innovation, ultimately improving the performance of women-led businesses. Women with good digital skills show high self-efficacy, confidence in making strategic decisions, and are more adaptable to digital transformation (Qian Li, 2024). In addition, access to technologies such as e-commerce platforms, online training, and digital marketing systems has been proven to strengthen the motivation of entrepreneurial women to develop independently (Mediany & Shodiq, 2024).

In organizations, structural and managerial factors greatly determine the direction of women's motivation to lead. The results of research by Gunes & Chang (2025) and Al-Shammari (2025) show that organizations that implement democratic and transformational leadership styles encourage the creation of participatory, open, and innovative work environments. This pattern fosters women's intrinsic motivation through feelings of being valued, empowered, and contributing tangibly. In addition, organizational policies that support work-life balance, mentoring, and gender-neutral performance evaluation systems as shown in the studies of Thien et al. (2026) and Alhmoudi & Rashid (2025), increase women's sense of competence and involvement. Inclusive organizational support not only strengthens the confidence of female leaders but also increases their extrinsic motivation to achieve professional and social goals (Agbanyo & Jiang, 2025).

Furthermore, in culture, social norms and gender perceptions play a dual role as obstacles as well as motivational catalysts. On the one hand, patriarchal culture and stereotypes of traditional roles of women are often obstacles for them to occupy strategic leadership positions (Khanal, 2026; Thien et al., 2026). But on the other hand, this condition encourages some women to develop strong intrinsic motivation to prove competence and challenge structural inequality (Wulandari & Ahmad, 2025). Research in Asia and the Middle East shows that women who face high social pressures show greater resilience, self-efficacy, and adaptive capacity in carrying out digital leadership roles (Kani & Shabila, 2025; Al-Shammari, 2025).

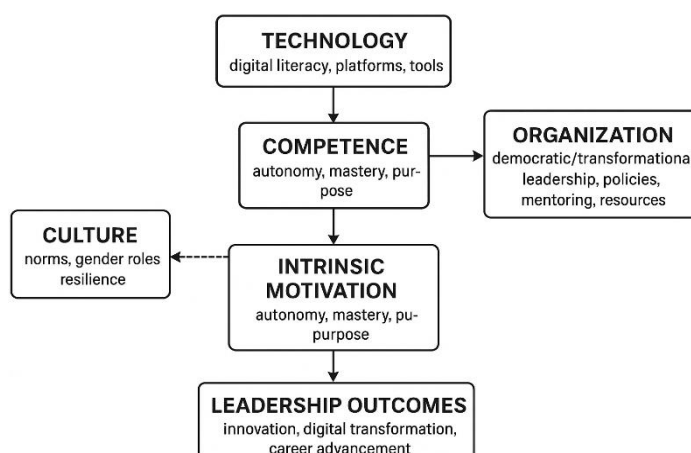


Figure 1. Integrated Framework of Women's Digital Leadership Motivation

Culture also shapes women's leadership styles. The Khadiva & Rudito (2025) study confirms that extrinsic motivation is often aligned with an authentic economic-oriented leadership style, while intrinsic motivation drives the emergence of social-environment-oriented servant and spiritual leadership styles. This leadership style shows a shift in values, where women leaders pursue not only financial success, but also social and ecological sustainability in accordance with the principles of the Triple Bottom Line. Thus, the cultural context shapes the orientation of values and the direction of women's motivation in leading organizations in the digital era.

The interaction between technology, organizations, and culture creates a complex ecosystem for the growth of women's leadership motivation. Technology opens up opportunities and expands the space for innovation; organizations provide structural and social support; Meanwhile, culture is an arena of values and meanings that shape the orientation of leadership. If these three aspects go in harmony, women's motivation to play an active role in the digital economy will not only survive but also transform into a driving force for global innovation and sustainability (Ristanovi et al., 2024; Wulandari & Ahmad, 2025).

Research Gaps

A synthesis of fifteen articles shows that the study of women's motivation in digital leadership still leaves some important gaps. The research gaps can be summarized into the following four main categories.

a. Conceptual Gap

Most research addresses intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but few explicitly integrate key motivational theories such as Self-Determination Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Push–Pull Motivation Theory. The relationship between motivation, digital competence, and leadership outcomes is still fragmented, and the role of social-collective values in shaping women's leadership identities has not been analyzed in depth.

b. Methodological Gap

The research is dominated by qualitative methods and cross-sectional surveys so that it does not describe the dynamics of motivation in the long term. The use of mixed-method, longitudinal study, experimental, and advanced analysis such as SEM, bibliometric analysis, or digital trace analytics is still very limited.

c. Geographic/Contextual Gap

Studies tend to be centered on Asia and the Middle East, while African, Latin American, or Eastern European contexts are rarely studied. In addition, the research focus is still on formal organizations, with little attention to modern digital ecosystems such as startups, gig economies, remote working, and AI-driven workplaces.

d. Population Gap

Most studies reviewed managers, academics, and entrepreneurs. Other groups such as women in STEM, digital freelancers, content creators, or rural digital entrepreneurs

have not been explored much. The study also did not pay attention to differences in motivation based on age, education, social class, or culture, so that the aspect of intersectionality was still poorly worked on.

Implications

a. Practical Implications

This research emphasizes the importance of organizational and HR support for women's motivation through flexible work policies, mentoring, digital training, and a bias-free evaluation system. The government also needs to expand access to technology, provide incentives for women MSMEs, and strengthen anti-discrimination regulations. Digital empowerment programs such as coding, digital marketing, and business training are key to narrowing the technology gap and improving women's leadership.

b. Theoretical Implications

This study enriches the literature by integrating Self-Determination Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Push–Pull Motivation Theory in the context of the digital economy. Women's motivation has been proven to be multidimensional and influenced by the interaction of technology, organizational culture, and social norms. This contributes to the development of a new conceptual model of women's leadership motivation in the digital age.

c. Social Implications

Increasing women's motivation and leadership in the digital sector has a significant impact on emancipation, gender equality, and inclusive social development. Women's access to technology and strategic leadership spaces strengthens public participation and encourages the creation of a more ethical and collaborative digital ecosystem. These findings support the achievement of the SDGs, especially gender equality and inclusive economic growth.

5. | CONCLUSION

Women's motivation in digital leadership is formed through the dynamic interaction between intrinsic, extrinsic, and social factors, which are amplified by technological, organizational, and cultural contexts. Internal motivations such as self-actualization, resilience, and social values are combined with external factors in the form of career opportunities, organizational support, and technological advances that expand women's participation space in the digital economy. While challenges such as gender bias and double burden remain, global trends show that women are increasingly adaptive, innovative, and playing a strategic role in building collaborative and sustainable value-based leadership. Therefore, it is recommended that governments, organizations, and educational institutions strengthen an inclusive digital leadership ecosystem through affirmative policies, digital literacy training, and cross-sectoral mentoring mechanisms to ensure women are not only engaged but also empowered and recognized as key drivers of equitable and sustainable digital transformation.

This SLR identifies several gaps for future research. First, there is a need for longitudinal studies to track how women's motivation in digital leadership evolves over time. Second, digital self-efficacy should be examined as a key mediating or moderating variable within motivational frameworks. Third, studies in Southeast Asian contexts remain limited, requiring culturally grounded investigations. Fourth, comparative research between male and female digital leaders is needed to uncover gender-based differences. Fifth, future work should apply advanced quantitative methods such as SEM or multilevel modeling. Additionally, researchers should develop integrated motivational models that combine intrinsic, extrinsic, and social factors. Finally, emerging areas such as AI-based work, gig platforms, and metaverse leadership, as well as policy or intervention-oriented studies, remain largely unexplored.

Future research on women's digital leadership motivation will benefit greatly from methodological advancements, cultural diversification, and stronger theoretical integrations. By addressing these gaps, upcoming studies can offer deeper insight into how women navigate, negotiate, and shape leadership trajectories in the rapidly evolving digital economy. These research directions are essential not only for scholarly development but also for informing practical interventions, organizational policies, and national strategies aimed at strengthening inclusive and sustainable digital leadership ecosystems.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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